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Public Input Sought in High Speed Rail Study

MONTPELIER - - A new website is offering a look into the future – a future of high speed rail service between Boston and Montreal.

Visit www.bostonmontrealhsr.org to learn about a new Boston to Montreal High Speed Rail Feasibility Study and find out how to be involved in the planning process.

The Vermont Agency of Transportation in partnership with the State of New Hampshire and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and in conjunction with the Federal Railroad Administration is sponsoring the study. In late 2000, this Boston to Montreal corridor was included as part of one of the nation's three new High Speed Rail Corridors designated by the Federal Railroad Administration. The principal objectives of high speed rail service are to reduce congestion associated with highway and air travel and provide an alternate way to travel.

Phase I of the Boston to Montreal High Speed Rail Study will be focused on developing preliminary service projections, identifying institutional and policy issues, and documenting basic existing infrastructure information. The corridor is about 325 miles; roughly equal to the Northeast high speed rail corridor between Boston and Philadelphia.

The website is part of a public outreach campaign to generate interest and identify issues for high speed rail service. The site includes an overview of high speed rail, a description of the corridor, links to other related sites and an up-to-date schedule, including future meeting dates, of the Phase I activities.

The website not only provides an opportunity for the public to be kept informed on the study, but also can be used to provide feedback to the study team. As the study continues, meeting agendas and minutes will be posted on the site.

The first series of public meetings will begin in February. The meetings will start at 6 p.m. with a half-hour open house, followed by the formal presentation. The schedule is:

- Massachusetts: Monday, February 11, 2002 at Gallagher Intermodal Transportation Center on Hale Street in Lowell.
- New Hampshire: Tuesday, February 12, 2002 at the New Hampshire Department of Transportation John O. Morton Building on Hazen Drive in Concord.
- Vermont: Wednesday, February 13, 2002 at the Pavilion Auditorium on State Street in Montpelier.

The meetings are open to the public. Individuals interested in the future of transportation in the Boston to Montreal corridor are encouraged to attend.

Scott Bascom of the Vermont Agency of Transportation - project manager for the study – said that the team's public outreach goals are to provide "full coordination and communication with key stakeholders and local communities, a proactive study approach, and thorough identification of potential positive and negative project impacts" in the study process.

The study began in December 2001 and will be completed by September 2002.

The study team is led by the consulting firm of Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas, Inc. of Manchester, NH.

For further information on the study please contact:

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